

So the benefits which a free river would confer have, in a great degree, been lost, not because there are insuperable obstacles in the way, but because the operations for removing the obstructions have been hampered by the insufficiency and uncertainty of government appropriations.

The importance of the improvement of the Columbia should remove it from the catalogue of ordinary works of this character, and entitle it to special consideration. The vast volume of commerce seeking passage in and out of the Columbia argues strongly for the removal of such perils to navigation as can be removed with a reasonable expenditure of funds. But urgent as the improvement at the mouth of the river is, the work at the cascades and the dalles is even more important, because there is a rich empire now laid under tribute to monopoly, that is anxiously waiting for a free waterway to remove its grievance. Eastern Washington, Eastern Oregon and Idaho will rejoice when the Columbia is free for navigation to the sea.

The disposition recently manifested in congress for more liberal appropriations for river and harbor improvements of recognized importance gives increased strength to the hope that the work on the Columbia will be pushed with a less niggardly and short-sighted policy in the future. If the amount the engineers estimate could be profitably expended at the cascades, \$1,000,000.00, should be made available for the work next year, and the policy thus inaugurated followed up a few years, the object sought would be realized in a short time and at an immense saving to the general government. The boat railway at the dalles is a contemporaneous need, and should receive similar attention.

FROM ROSEBURG TO THE COAST.

THE scheme for constructing a railroad from Roseburg to the coast at Coos bay is being revived, and with good prospects of being successful this time. The farmers of Douglas county are now realizing that their interests would be subserved by the construction of a railroad to the coast, and as the preliminary survey was made some time ago, there is a definite basis on which to make calculations for such an enterprise. The greatest altitude which it would be necessary to attain in going from Roseburg to the coast is only nine hundred feet higher than the city of Roseburg, making a surprisingly moderate grade for a railroad in that region.

Besides the immediate benefit to farmers along the line, and, indeed, to all who make Roseburg their chief market place, such a road would open up new

farming territory and mineral and timber wealth. There are vast forests of valuable timber—fir, oak, cedar, etc.—that can not now be conveniently reached, that would be brought in direct communication with good markets by the railroad, and it would also penetrate some excellent coal fields that only lack adequate transportation facilities to insure their development. There is a movement now on foot to secure the necessary capital for this enterprise, when it will be pushed rapidly to completion, and it can scarcely fail to be a profitable business venture. The farmers along the proposed road offer to pay, for five years, the same rates that are now charged to Portland. The distance from Roseburg to Coos bay by the route that the railroad would take is about seventy miles. Tide water would be reached at the bay and reliable connections made with boats plying to the large shipping ports.

The railroad now running through Douglas county has a general direction north and south, and along this line the greatest growth is now taking place. Places at considerable distances from the railroad must depend on water communication for sending out their products and getting in their supplies, unless the very tedious method of teaming is resorted to. This tends to retard the development of the interior. A railroad from Roseburg to the coast would leave only a comparatively small part of the Umpqua valley without reasonably good shipping facilities. It would add a competing line to the metropolis of the valley, which alone would be a benefit that the producers of that region can hardly overestimate. It will give a genuine boom to the surpassingly rich country through which it passes, as well as to its termini. One of the most gratifying prospects that Douglas county now has for an immediate and appreciable stride forward lies in the scheme for a railroad from Roseburg to the coast.

Roseburg has been enjoying great prosperity the past year, which must be largely enhanced by the successful inauguration of this project. The business men of the city have for a number of years been looking forward to the consummation of this railroad scheme. This line was even projected before the Oregon & California road was constructed, but it lost its importance for a time after railroad communication had been secured, and rested until now without any active measures being taken to carry out what had been planned. The large and profitable business that one line has been able to secure and augment with the growth of the city and tributary country indicates that a line to the coast must result in a profitable business for the enterprise itself and for those industries which will flourish along the route. Construction work will doubtless begin in a few months.